

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-07 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 AID-05 CIEP-02 SS-15 STR-04 ITC-01 TRSE-00

USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 /089 W

-----192132Z 102500 /64

P R 191825Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2085

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMCONSUL MONTERREY

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 0281

MONTERREY FOR APHIS

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECIN, EPAP, PFOR, NU, PN, XK

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTS OF CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLICS AND PANAM MEET IN  
MANAGUA TO DISCUSS COFFEE RUST THREAT

REF: MANAGUA 0123

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE CHIEFS OF STATE OF ALL 6 COUNTRIES OF THE ISTHMUS  
MET IN MANAGUA ON JANUARY 17 IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S CALL  
FOR AN EMERGENCY DISCUSSION OF MEASURES TO COMBAT COFFEE RUST. WHILE  
NO CONCRETE DECISIONS WERE TAKEN, ALL REPORTEDLY AGREED TO WORK  
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TOGETHER TO FIGHT THIS BLIGHT WHICH ENDANGERS A VERY IMPORTANT EXPORT  
CROP. A MEETING OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS  
SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN MANAGUA BEGINNING JANUARY 19 SHOULD OUTLINE  
STEPS WHICH CAN BE TAKEN IN THIS REGARD ON A REGIONAL BASIS. NICA-  
RAGUA APPARENTLY HOPING FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. GON IS MEANWHILE  
PRESSING AHEAD WITH ITS OWN ERADICATION MEASURES, INCLUDING FURTHER  
DESTRUCTION OF COFFEE TREES. HONDURAN AND SALVADORAN CHIEFS HELD

BRIEF PRIVATE SESSION ON THE BORDER DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENTS OR CHIEFS OF STATE OF ALL CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLICS AND PANAMA HELD EMERGENCY MEETING AT MANAGUA AIRPORT JANUARY 17. (ACCOMPANYING AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS MET SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THEIR NICARAGUAN COUNTERPARTS.) PRESIDENT SOMOZA HAD CONVOKED SUMMIT MEETING TO SOLICIT HIS COLLEAGUES' SUPPORT IN REGIONAL EFFORT TO COMBAT ROYA (COFFEE RUST) WHICH THREATENS A LEADING EXPORT CROP OF AREA. AFTER NEARLY SIX HOURS OF DISCUSSION THE SIX LEADERS AGREED TO WAIT FOUR MORE DAYS BEFORE DECIDING ON A JOINT PLAN OF ATTACK ON THE ROYA PROBLEM. THAT DECISION REPORTEDLY AWAITS RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A MEETING OF REGIONAL MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS WHICH IS TO BE HELD JANUARY 19 IN MANAGUA.

2. FOLLOWING SUMMIT DISCUSSIONS, SOMOZA TOLD PRESS THAT:  
--HE DEEPLY APPRECIATED THE DEMONSTRATION OF REGIONAL SOLIDARITY WHICH THE PROMPT RESPONSE OF HIS COUNTER-PARTS TO HIS CALL FOR EMERGENCY MEETING REPRESENTED. (WE BELIEVE THIS WAS FIRST SUMMIT MEETING SINCE 1975.)  
--HE HAD FOUND COMPLETE AGREEMENT AMONG HIS COLLEAGUES THAT WHATEVER PROGRAM NICARAGUA CARRIES OUT TO COMBAT ROYA, BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF UPCOMING AGRICULTURE MINISTERS' MEETING, WILL ENJOY THE BACKING OF ALL GOVERNMENTS OF THE ISTHMUS.  
--COFFEE GROWERS THROUGHOUT THE ISTHMUS SHOULD BE ASSURED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WILL SAFEGUARD THEIR INTERESTS.

3. IN AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE, SOMOZA ADDED THAT:  
--GON HAS THREE CHOICES REGARDING ROYA: (A) DESTROY 3,000-4,000 MANZANAS OF COFFEE TREES; (B) CONTINUE PRESENT PROGRAM OF DESTROYING  
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ALL COFFEE TREES WITHIN 30 METERS OF AN INFESTED TREE (AND QUARANTINE MEASURES); OR (C) LIVE WITH THE BLIGHT AND PLANT NEW TREES IF COFFEE PRODUCTION IS NOT TO BE ABANDONED.

(AS SEEN BELOW, GON SEEMS TO BE MOVING ON ASPECTS OF ALL THREE CHOICES.)

--GON IS DISPOSED TO FINANCE COFFEE GROWERS WHO WILL PLANT NEW TREES TO GET BETTER YIELDS. (NICARAGUA'S AVERAGE YIELD OF ABOUT 700 LBS. PER MANZANA--1.7 ACRES--IS AMONG LOWEST IN REGION.)

--ROYA ERADICATION PROGRAM WILL COST NICARAGUA BETWEEN \$18 AND \$53 MILLION; GON PRESENTLY SPENDING \$200,000 PER WEEK IN THIS EFFORT.

--IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT ROYA WAS INTRODUCED INTO NICARAGUA BY DIRECT "MECHANICAL" MEANS, AND NOT BY WIND-BORNE SPORES.

4. OTHER COFFEE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS: NICARAGUAN PRESS ANNOUNCED JANUARY 18 THAT BRAZILIAN "INSTITUTO CAMPINAS" HAD IDENTIFIED ROYA ENCOUNTERED IN NICARAGUA AS "STRAIN NO. 2), OUT OF SOME 20 POSSIBLE VARIETIES. (IDENTIFICATION OF STRAIN SHOULD ASSIST IN CHOICE OF FUNGICIDES AND HERBICIDES TO COMBAT LOCAL ROYA). GON HAS MEANWHILE LAUNCHED ITS LOCAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THIS BLIGHT (PARA 1-G

REFTEL). SOMOZA MET WITH COFFEE GROWERS IN INFESTED AREA JANUARY 14 TELLING THEM THAT, ALTHOUGH SOME 3,000-4,000 MANZANAS OF COFFEE PLANTATIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE DESTROYED, FINANCING WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR REPLANTING. AUSTRALIAN ROYA EXPERT, DR. SHAW, REPORTEDLY COMMENTED TO SAME GROWERS' MEETING THAT GON USING PROPER MEASURES TO COMBAT BLIGHT.

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P R 191825Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2086  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
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AMCONSUL MONTERREY  
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MONTERREY FOR APHIS

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5. OTHER TOPICS: JOURNALISTS UTILIZED PRESS CONFERENCE TO POST OTHER QUESTIONS FOR ASSEMBLED PRESIDENTS AS WELL. AMONG MORE INTERESTING COMMENTS WERE:

--SALVADORAN PRESIDENT MOLINA, WHO MET PRIVATELY WITH HONDURAN PRESIDENT MELGAR FOR 20 MINUTES, SAID THAT THE LATTER" KNOWS THE EXACT REASONS" WHY THE GOES HAS NOT YET SENT THE BILATERAL MEDIATION AGREEMENT TO THE SALVADOAN LEGISLATURE FOR RATIFICATION, BUT ADDED THAT SOON "WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO SEND IT".

--COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT ODUBER SAID THAT THE NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ARA IS A VERY WISE ONE WHICH

AUGURS WELL FOR US RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL AMERICA.

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--SOMOZA RESPONDED TO QUESTION ABOUT "POTOSI TAX" (ON GOODS ENTERING NICARAGUA FROM EL SALVADOR ACROSS GULF OF FONSECA), SAYING THAT HE HAD ORDERED NICARAGUAN PORT AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE SUCH AN "EQUALIZATION" TAX ONLY ON GOODS DESTINED FOR NICARAGUA AND NOT ON GOODS IN TRANSIT.

6. COMMENT: SOMOZA WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED THAT OTHER LEADERS OF REGION HAD RESPONDED UNANIMOUSLY TO HIS CALL. HE IS PROBABLY HOPING THAT CACM COUNTRIES AND PANAMA WILL PROVIDE FUNDS TO ASSIST GON IN ITS ROYA ERADICATION CAMPAIGN. WE WILL HAVE TO AWAIT RESULTS OF THIS WEEK'S MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING TO SEE WHETHER SOMOZA-SPONSORED SUMMIT BEARS THE FRUITS HE HOPES FOR:  
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